

Redefining the Marine Fire Support Military Occupation Specialty  
EWS Contemporary Issues Paper

Submitted by:

Captain S.C. Allshouse, CG 2

Captain A.W. Blanton, CG 9

To

Major A.J. Floyd, CG 2

Major R. Leaman, CG 9

5 January 2009

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>05 JAN 2009</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-00-2009 to 00-00-2009</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Redefining the Marine Fire Support Military Occupation Specialty</b>				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>United States Marine Corps,Command and Staff College, Marine Corps Combat Development,Marine Corps University, 2076 Main St.,Quantico,VA,22134</b>				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT <b>See Report</b>					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT <b>Same as Report (SAR)</b>	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>15</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

## **Introduction**

Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) and Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) have revealed a severe lack of properly trained and qualified fire support personnel. This deficiency which impacts maneuver's ability to conduct combined arms operations. General Jones identified the importance of fire supporters in the Marine air ground task force (MAGTF) and stated, "Failure to develop professional fire supporters could result in disaster."<sup>1</sup> The fire supporter must be able to coordinate and deconflict several different fire support assets and maneuver which all operate in the same space. The current operational environment does not provide for proper development or maturing of qualified fire supporters. The artillery community can help fulfill the Marine Corps' and Joint Forces' need for qualified fire supporters by developing a Fire Supporter military occupational specialty (MOS) with a unique school path, legitimate career progression, and increased force structure.

## **Background**

The artillery community has found itself to be over-tasked with a variety of missions that range from conducting normal

---

1 . Patrecia Slayden Hollis, "Fixing the Marine Artillery", *Field Artillery Journal*, September - October 2000, 4.

artillery combat operations, to civil military operations (CMO), to ad hoc provisional military police (MP) operations. While these missions can be accomplished, it comes at a price: having an officer and enlisted corps that are strictly a "Jack of all trades, and a master of none." This comes as a great detriment to the infantry units, which are supported by fire supporters with little experience. By altering the current school path and creating a Fire Supporter MOS, artillery can provide better support for the Marine Corps and Joint Forces.

#### **Fire Supporter MOS with an Unique School Path**

The current system of selecting lieutenants at The Basic School is an excellent method and does not require any change. It gives a broad selection of individuals, with varying personalities, to fill and 0802 Artillery MOS, or a new 08xx Fire Supporter MOS. The change in school path will occur once the lieutenants reach Fort Sill to begin their artillery training. The initial training of all the lieutenants should remain the same with a split occurring at approximately the halfway or two-thirds point. At that point, a straw pull or selection board should take place at Fort Sill by the Marine Corps instructors, based on a quality spread that would split

the lieutenants again into either the 0802 MOS or the 08xx Fire Supporter MOS. The lieutenants would be judged on their performance in the different aspects of their artillery training: gunnery, fire support, calling for fire, logistics, etc, as well as personality. Those lieutenants who show more of the traits that would make them excellent fire supporters would be given that 08xx MOS, while those that look like they would fit in better working in an artillery battery/ battalion would be given the 0802 MOS.

The last half or third of training at Fort Sill would then encompass more of those specific skills required for the lieutenants' MOS's. Those lieutenants that would be heading directly to a battery would be given more in depth classes on battery operations, logistics, gunnery, and the Triad of Fires Systems. Those lieutenants receiving the 08xx Fire Supporter MOS would be given classes on fire support planning at the regiment or below, classes on Appendix 19 construction, and aviation operations as it pertains to close air support (CAS). Following graduation at Fort Sill, those lieutenants with the 0802 MOS report directly to their battalions. Those with the 08xx MOS report to Expeditionary Warfare Training Group Pacific (EWTGPAC) to complete the Naval Gunfire Spotter's Course and the Joint Fires Observer (JFO) Course. Once the lieutenants complete the

course they report directly to their respective artillery battalion's liaison sections.

The enlisted school path for the 0861 scout observer is sufficient and doesn't require any modification. Both officers and enlisted fire supporters will require follow-on education in order to continue the development of their skills. This education will occur at different points throughout their careers based on the rank they are at and the billets they have held.

### **Legitimate Career Progression**

In order to maximize combat power, we must use all the available resources to best advantage. To do so, we must follow a doctrine of combined arms. Combined arms is the full integration of arms in such a way that to counteract one, the enemy must become more vulnerable to another.<sup>2</sup>

General Jones was concerned with the Marine Corps' combined arms capability and ordered a review of the Marine Corps Artillery shortly after becoming Commandant. The committee developed the concept of the triad of fires for the MAGTF. The first two legs of the triad of fires, the M777 155mm lightweight howitzer and the High Mobility Artillery Rocket System, provide

---

2. MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington D.C.: GPO, 1997, 94.

medium and deep fires comparable to the Army's capability. The third leg of triad is the Expeditionary Fire Support System (EFSS), 120 mm towed mortar system. The EFSS is transportable by the MV-22 and is meant to provide fires during the ship to objective maneuver phase of amphibious operations.<sup>3</sup> Integrating these systems effectively with aircraft and maneuver is challenging. Now more than ever fire supporters require specialized training and experience to achieve the Marine Corps vision of combined arms.

Fire support is an art which must be developed and refined over time; fire support billets are turned over frequently and these skills are quickly lost. These skill sets should be retained and cultivated instead of reset every six-twelve months. By splitting the MOS into two separate career paths, the artillery community can develop and retain fire supporters, while also developing expertise in the triad of fires systems.

### **Enlisted Career Progression**

Scout observers, 0861, are developed in the battery and battalion liaison sections under the mentorship of lieutenants

---

3. Hollis, 3.

and staff NCOs. Experienced corporals attend the JFO Course to become a universal observer/qualified observer for all surface and air delivered ordnance. Once this course is complete, the value of the 0861 increases dramatically for the supported unit. The new qualification extends the capability and range of the battalion's FACs and JTACs. Potential billets for 0861s corporals and sergeants include:

- Air Naval Gunfire Liaison Company (ANGLICO)
- distributed operations units
- artillery battalion liaison sections which support infantry battalions
- Marine Special Operations Command (MARSOC)

The priority for staff and gunnery sergeants is to attend the Tactical Air Control Party Course (TACP) in order to become Joint Terminal Attack Controllers (JTAC) followed by the Fire Support Coordinator Course (FSCC). Currently FAC/JTACs are required to return to their primary MOS after two to three years. The proposed change allows the scout observers to maintain the JTAC designation throughout their career, allowing the Marine Corps to maintain experienced FAC/JTACs and fires coordinators. Potential billets for 0861 staff sergeants and gunnery sergeants include:

- ANGLICO: JTAC, team chief, SALT chief, platoon sergeant



- Marine expeditionary unit (MEU) target information chiefs
- JTAC or fire support billets
- distributive operations units
- artillery battalion/regiment fire support centers
- MARSOC

Promotion to master sergeant returns the scout observer to the current 0861 MOS track. The modified MOS track creates a more qualified and well rounded fire supporter.

### **Officer Career Progression**

As fire supporters gain experience and rank, first lieutenants and captains attend the FSCC and JTAC courses, producing an essential capability for the supported unit, enabling the officers to maintain the JTAC designation throughout their career. Potential billets for 08XX first lieutenants and captains include:

- ANGLICO: JTAC, fire control team leader
- distributive operations units
- artillery battalion liaison officer (LNO)
- joint fires billet
- fire support billets
- MARSOC
- appropriate b-billets

Senior captain fire supporters fill a variety of different billets and need an understanding of non-lethal effects of fires. As they gain experience, fire supporters attend Information Operations/Non-lethal Effects of Fires and targeting

courses in order to integrate all assets of fire support.

Potential billets for senior captains include:

- MEU target information officer
- battalion fire support coordinator for the infantry battalion
- JTAC billets
- fire support coordinator billets
- joint fires billets
- instructor billets with potential for command in the school house
- MARSOC
- appropriate b-billet

The emphasis for majors is placed on filling senior level and joint fire support billets. At this point in their career, these Marines are the most experienced and qualified fire supporters in the Marine Corps. Potential billets for 08XX majors include:

- intermediate level school
- joint target information officer billets
- joint fire support billets
- regimental/battalion fire support coordinators
- ANGLICO: platoon commander (equivalent to company command), operations officer (equivalent to battalion operations officer), XO ANGLICO (equivalent to battalion XO)
- MARSOC: targeting/fire support billets, company command (equivalent to company command)
- command billets in the school houses
- b-billet

Upon promotion to lieutenant colonel the artillery MOS tracks would merge and follow the existing career track. The

artillery battalion commander must also fill the infantry regiment's Fire Support Coordinator (FSC) position. The proposed fire support track develops the required experience to become a qualified fire supporter.

### **Increased Force Structure**

As the Marine Corps enters the 21<sup>st</sup> century it continues to develop new tactics to combat our current enemies. This manifests itself in the form of distributed operations (DO). "The ability to have small, highly capable squads and platoons maneuvering across a large operational area will create the spatial and temporal advantage ground forces have sought historically."<sup>4</sup> Distributed operations can only be successful if all forms of fire support are made available to small units. Placing trained and equipped fire supporters within units executing the DO mission relieves the burden of extra training and equipment from units while also creating a more capable force. This will allow DO base units to focus on infantry mission essential task lists (METLS) while fire supporters focus on their specific METLS.<sup>5</sup>

---

4. Capt Michael A. Little, "Task Organizing for Distributed Operations", *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 2007, 46.

5. Col Robert K. Dobson, Jr., "The Distributed Operations Hurdles", *Marine Corps Gazette*, October 2004, 32.

As the Marine Corps grows over the next few years to meet the 202K personnel increase, the opportunity will arise to increase and restructure the artillery MOS that has proven invaluable. "In order to maintain tactical mobility and maneuver, fulfill logistical requirements, and conduct fire support while conducting Distributed Operations (DO), planners will need to change the Task Organization (TO) of the Marine air-ground task forces (MAGTFs) substantially."<sup>6</sup> ANGLICO is a unit uniquely suited to support the DO mission. Gen Jones stated, "I'm bringing back the ANGLICO in its original form. It was a mistake to get rid of our ANGLICOs."<sup>7</sup> ANGLICO has returned and continues to grow as the need for capable fire supporters continues to grow.

### **Counterargument**

Some will challenge the validity of splitting the artillery MOS into two separate career paths. One of their concerns is that fire support officers would not have the experience needed to command an artillery battalion. One may come to this conclusion based on the amount of time the fire supporter spends in an artillery battalion as a company grade officer. However,

---

6. Little, 46.

7. Hollis, 4.

by doctrine the artillery battalion commander should act as the senior fire support coordinator for an infantry regiment. With this in mind it seems even more appropriate to have a fire supporter as a battalion commander. With an executive officer and operations officer that are artillery officers, the battalion commander has the expertise to fight his battalion and provide excellent fire support guidance to the infantry regiment.

Opponents will argue that the current fire support system worked for OIF and OEF. Fire supporters and JTACs were forced to learn on the job through hard lessons. The Marine Corps has been successful because of its ability to train and prepare for conflict in any climate and location, a philosophy which must be applied to the training of fire support personnel. General Jones made it clear that, "The Marine Corps, not the individual, must make sure our Marines have the opportunity to progress and become experts in their field. That's particularly important in field artillery, in the fire support business."<sup>8</sup> The proposed fire support track would provide the training, experience, and retention of qualified fire supporters for future conflicts.

The opposition believes that the JTAC MOS belongs in the aviation community. Increasing the number of ground MOS JTACs

---

8. Hollis, 4.

is not meant to phase out the aviators from the JTAC MOS. The infantry battalion receives the specified number of aviators established by the table of organization. This modification reinforces this capability by providing a complement of qualified observers and JTACs. The additional observers and controllers dramatically increase the FACs coverage, reach, and combat effectiveness.

### **Conclusion**

"The mission of the Marine Field Artillery is to furnish close and continuous fire support by neutralizing, destroying or suppressing targets that threaten the success of the supported unit."<sup>9</sup> This mission statement identifies the importance of Marine fire supporters, but their capability must be further developed. As the Marine Corps' combined arms assets increase, so must the quality of the individuals controlling the integration of fire support. The Marine Corps has the ability to restructure the artillery community, which will ensure qualified fire supporters support our forces. Fire supporters, with the right training and experience have the potential to become unmatched combat multipliers.

---

9. MCWP 3-16.1, *Artillery Operations*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington D.C.: GPO, May 2002, 1-1.



## Bibliography

Dobson, Robert K., Jr. Col, "The Distributed Operations Hurdles", *Marine Gazette*, October 2004, 32-33.

Grice, Michael D. Maj, "Marine Corps Joint Terminal Attack Controllers", *Marine Corps Gazette*, April 2006, 51-53.

Hollis, Patricia Slayden, "Fixing the Marine Artillery", *Field Artillery Journal*, September - October 2000, 3-5.

Little, Michael A. Capt, "Task Organizing for Distributed Operations", *Marine Corps Gazette*, September 2007, 46-49.

Martin, Martin G.R. Maj, "*Dispersed Operations, Strike Teams, and Future War*", United States Marine Corps, Command Staff College, 2007.

McCrary, Brian K, "*ANGLICO: Birth, Life, Death, and Resurrection*", United States Marine Corps, Command and Staff College, 2001.

MCDP 1, *Warfighting*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1997.

MCDP 1-3, *Tactics*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1997.

MCWP 3-16.1, *Artillery Operations*, Headquarters United States Marine Corps, Washington, D.C.: GPO, May 2002.